

# SCOTLAND'S R32 STORY

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Over the sea from Skye: the legend of Scottish piping

The Covenanters' dream is crushed

Folk ballads keep musical memoirs of bloodier times

Eastern promise fulfilled by Scots

Plane crash that came to grief for wartime Royals



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# SCOTLAND'S STORY



**COVER:**  
A piper from  
Scotland's most  
famous piping  
family, the  
MacCrimmons,  
plays a salute  
to his chief in  
this Romantic  
illustration  
from the 1840s.

## Was rule of the godly such a moral victory?

The Cromwell-backed Covenanting coup, that installed a hard-line presbyterian regime in Edinburgh in 1648, embarked on a programme of social control that sounds positively terrifying today – yet it was nonetheless a remarkable social experiment.

Nowadays, if a teenager turns on his or her parents with an abusive tirade, the withdrawal of privileges or curtailment of social activities might well result. But in 1649, the statutory punishment for cursing your parents was to be put to death without mercy.

On the other hand, the Kirk in 1650 put pressure on parliament to see that those who broke their marriage vows and embarked on an adulterous relationship were also executed – so 'maither and faither' had to watch their step, too. If the 'Rule of the godly' sounds like a frighteningly exclusive moral concept, that's because it was.

Colourful and outspoken, radical presbyterians Archibald Johnston and Samuel Rutherford, are not very well known in Scotland today. But

in the turbulent years of the mid-17th century these two – Johnston in particular – were men to be reckoned with.

Rutherford was famed for his outspoken views, and a preaching style that was so expressive, people thought he might actually take-off from the pulpit! His views still find some popular support, particularly in America, but less fondly remembered are the scandals that resulted from his penchant for conveniently mixing matters spiritual with his sexual / desires.

In the 17th century, Scots settlers flooded into the Baltic lands of Poland and Prussia, and from there on to Lithuania and Russia – more than went to Ulster – yet this movement has been largely forgotten.

One notable emigrant was Patrick Gordon, famous diarist and tutor to Russian Tsar Peter the Great.

Among the early descendants of this Scottish diaspora were famous Polish philosopher Jan Johnstone, and, in the 20th century, others such as German philosopher, Emmanuel Kant.

# End game ends in a



A woman faints in the foreground of this anonymous painting of the execution of King Charles I. The Covenanters, who wanted a monarchy of three

# conquered kingdom



Covenanted kingdoms, had not been consulted – and ignited Cromwell's wrath by reimposing the monarchy.

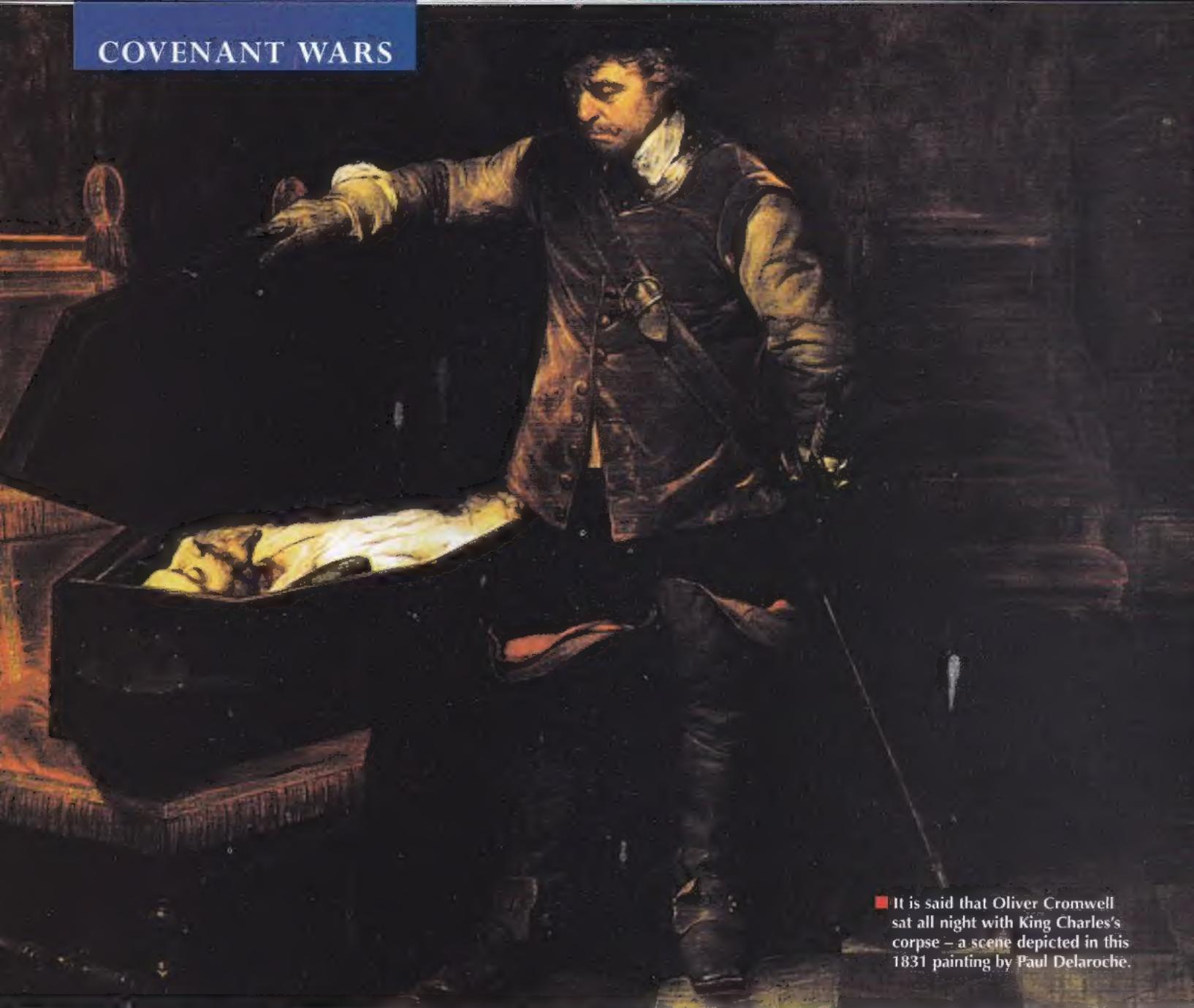
When the regime in Edinburgh recoiled at the execution of Charles I and warmed again to monarchy, a rift with Cromwell was inevitable – and proved fatal

In the aftermath of the defeat of the Engagers, the Whiggamore Raid of September, 1648, represented an armed attack and coup on Edinburgh. The rising came from south-west Scotland, a heartland of Covenanting radicalism, and in the autumn and winter of 1648 a political regime of radical and diehard Covenanters, often referred to as 'the kirk party', was established.

This regime was hostile to the agreement, detested the Engagers and attempted to purge Scottish institutions of the ungodly and bring about a social and moral revolution in the creation of a godly society. Only the godly, as sanctioned by the Commission of the Kirk, were allowed to hold public office. Hence anyone who supported the Engagement was barred from sitting in Parliament or holding any public office. The Parliament which met on January 4, 1649, therefore consisted solely of 'godly' members.

This regime was anti-aristocratic, too, in its political outlook and only 16 nobles were present in Parliament (compared to 56 in the 1648 Engagement Parliament).

Leading nobles and aristocrats who had been involved in the Engagement were forced by the Church to repent for their sins – a humiliating experience they did not forget when the aristocracy exerted its influence again at the Restoration. This exclusive regime, staffed by committed and godly ▶



It is said that Oliver Cromwell sat all night with King Charles's corpse – a scene depicted in this 1831 painting by Paul Delaroche.

## The blind, the lame and the elderly were to be proportioned off to those areas of the country which had the least burden of vagrants

Covenanters, was driven by a strong social vision which wanted to create a godly and morally purified society.

Accordingly, the 1649 Parliament, aggressively lobbied by the Commission of the Kirk, passed a body of social and moral legislation aimed at enforcing social control in the Scottish localities.

Kirk sessions and presbyteries acted as law-enforcement agencies and moral police force on behalf of the church and the state.

This was all designed to rid the country of sin, produce a purified godly society, and avoid the wrath of God's judgement. In terms of acts

which were passed, blasphemy and worshipping of false gods was to be punishable by death without pardon and children over 16 who either beat up or cursed their parents were to be put to death without mercy!

The objective of this legislation was to provide a model of social behaviour within the family unit and ensure that "others may hear and fear and not doe the Lyk".

In addition, incest was to be punished by death and fornication by fining. Fines would also be imposed on drunks and those who were 'scolders, filthie speakers and

makers or singers of badie songs'.

By May, 1650, the Commission of the Kirk was arguing that adultery with an unmarried woman should be punished by death! A national witch-hunt also took place in 1649, marking one of the five peaks of intensive prosecution of witchcraft in early modern Scotland. The 1649 hunt was focused on Fife, the Lothians and the Borders, and over 350 commissions for trials of witches were issued by the Committee of Estates between August and December, 1649.

The impact of warfare in the 1640s, increased taxation, plague and disease, and a rise in grain prices had led to an increase in vagrancy and social dislocation.

The 1649 Act anent the Poor sought to address this social problem, but its solutions had a strong moral overtone and aimed at

controlling the movement and locations of the vagrant population.

The problem of the poor was to be dealt with on a local basis and each parish or presbytery was to draw up lists of the poor within their own areas. Voluntary contributions were to be raised within each parish to help fund the poor, but moral decisions were taken on who should receive relief and those deemed to be lazy and 'slothful' while being physically able to work were to receive no aid.

The problem of begging was to be solved by forced labour. Those fit to work could be apprehended by church elders and put to useful employment so that the country could be relieved of an "unprofitable burthene".

Door-to-door begging was to be punished by imprisonment and anyone who helped vagabonds was

# His 'treachery' with Scots cost Charles his head

If the nations of Britain ever experienced a modern revolution, many believe it was with the execution of Charles I in 1649. The event was rooted in Charles's refusal to compromise what he saw as his unlimited superiority over his subjects, but it also stemmed from wider changes in the way people thought about how society should be structured – explicit themes in the months leading up to the king's beheading.

Charles's Engagement with the Scots in December, 1647, was part of a wider strategy to raise support across the three kingdoms for an attack on the English parliament – but it was viewed as an act of treachery by Oliver Cromwell and his army.

Crucially, the army officers believed they acted as 'God's instrument', and it was clear to them from Charles's track record that God had deemed him unfit to rule. It was around this time that regicide – execution of the king – began to be considered. Inspired by presbyterian ideology, they saw Charles

no longer as 'King Charles'. He was now merely Charles Stuart, a 'man of blood', tainted by guilt for the bloodshed of the Civil Wars, and stripped of his regality.

Throughout 1648, his Scottish supporters served to heighten English resentment to him – causing his arch-enemy, Cromwell, to angrily remark that the king was trying 'to vassalise us to a foreign nation'.

In the eyes of the English army, Cromwell's victory over Charles's forces at Preston in August, 1648, was yet another vote by God of no-confidence in Charles. The army believed it had secured God's 'mandate' to bully the English parliament into bringing Charles to trial, which it did in December.

Cromwell tried to broker an 11th-hour compromise, but when the king remained insistent, Cromwell vowed to 'cut off his head with the Crown upon it'.

At the trial in Westminster, Charles was accused of being the cause of the nation's

ills, due to his 'wicked' determination to uphold 'unlimited and tyrannical power to rule according to his will and to overthrow the rights and liberties of the people'.

As Charles Stuart, he had 'traitorously and maliciously (levied) war against parliament, and the people therein represented'. He was therefore to be impeached as 'a tyrant, traitor and murderer, and a public and implacable enemy to the Commonwealth of England'.

Charles's response was contemptuous but brilliant. He painted himself as a Constitutional monarch, and a true defender of the liberty and welfare of the people.

But his head was cut from his body on the scaffold in Whitehall on January 30, 1649.

Many onlooking supporters fainted in despair or ran forward to catch drops of his blood, but they could not long escape the stark reality of what was to come... Cromwell's military republic.



A contemporary engraving showing Charles I in his Privy Council as a key element of government. In fact, he paid little heed to its deliberations.

to be fined. Wandering vagrants were to be sent back to the parishes of their births where they were to be dealt with locally and put to work in their local area. Those who were unable to return to their native parish, such as the blind, the lame and the elderly, were to be proportioned off between those areas of the country which had the least burden of vagrant people.

Essentially, this amounted to the compulsory movement and division of labour of the weakest elements of the vagrant population on a national basis.

On the one hand, then, the rule of the godly represents a remarkable social experiment in how Scottish society should be ordered and behave. However, the reaction of the authorities to the execution of

Charles I in England in January, 1649, was to lead from a clash with the Cromwellian regime, through the exposure of political divisions in the kingdom of Scotland as a whole, to Cromwell's conquest of Scotland in 1650-51.

Despite their hostility to Charles I, the Covenanters did not want to destroy the monarchy and had wanted Charles to be a Covenanted King of three Covenanted kingdoms.

Charles was King of Scots and rightful descendant of the Stuart dynasty. However, he was executed in 1649 as King of England and the Scots had not been consulted over the execution. The abolition of the monarchy in England also put an end to the Anglo-Scottish dynastic union.

When news reached Edinburgh of the execution of the King, the

reaction of the Covenanter regime in Edinburgh was immediate. On February 5, 1649, the Scottish Parliament proclaimed Charles, Prince of Wales, as King of Great Britain. Therefore, the Edinburgh regime sought to reimpose the monarchy on a British basis and this very act was bound to arouse hostility, ending the love affair with Cromwell.

Yet the radical Covenanters of 1649 laid out their own terms and conditions which the new King would have to meet. The Act anent the Securing of Religion and Peace of the Kingdom of February 7, 1649, stated that the new King would have to subscribe to the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant, while presbyterianism was to be

established in all three kingdoms.

A British religious objective, based on imposition of presbyterianism, was still on the cards and this further angered Cromwell as Independency as a religious sect was to the fore in England. Yet agreement with the King proved difficult to reach as he was extremely reluctant to take the Covenant and only caved in to the demands of the godly when he had no other options left to pursue.

The Cromwellian conquest of Ireland, an ethnic and racial conquest, and the failure of another Montrose rebellion in the north of Scotland in 1650, left the king isolated. He subscribed to the Covenant in June, 1650, and was later crowned as King of Great Britain at Scone on January 1, 1651.

By this time, however, the ▶



■ Charles II was crowned as King of Great Britain at Scone on New Year's Day, 1651.

► Cromwellian conquest of Scotland was well under way.

In contrast to the war in Ireland, which Cromwell viewed as a race war with bloody barbarians, the Anglo-Scottish conflict of 1650-51 was essentially a clash between two godly Protestant nations.

The victor would be God's judgment on which side was right, but Cromwell regarded the Scots as a godly people who had gone astray, a feeling reflected in Cromwell's famous appeal to the General Assembly: "I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken."

Cromwell invaded Scotland in July, 1650, and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Scottish army at Dunbar on September 3 – a battle which must be regarded as one of the biggest military disasters in Scottish history. The Scottish army was almost twice the size of Cromwell's force and had a superior strategic position. Harassed by ministers at the battle scene, the Scottish commander, David Leslie cracked and in an unbelievable act of self-destruction, abandoned his superior position and attacked. The

result was a massive defeat.

The process of purification had extended into military affairs and resulted in the purging of the 'ungodly' from the army. The armed forces were severely weakened by purging to face the Cromwellian onslaught into Scotland in 1650-51.

National unity was now crucial to defend the kingdom, but this proved difficult to achieve because of factional divisions. The Northern Band of Oath of Engagement issued by north-eastern royalists in October, 1650, called for national unity. Subscribers to the band stated: "We are Scotchmen, we desyre to fight for our countie; religion, king and kingdom are in hazard".

On the other hand, the Western Remonstrance of October, 1650, took a different stance. Taking a hardline position, the Remonstrants resolved to expel the English armed forces from Scotland, but they also stated that the King's cause was ungodly and that the Scots should not interfere in the affairs of the English Commonwealth. Slowly but surely, unity was achieved with former Engagers and royalists being allowed back into the political fray,

and legislation was repealed which had kept them out. Former Engagers and royalists came back into the armed forces but unity had come too late in the day. The conflict was taken over the Border into English territory as Charles II sought to regain his English throne.

A Scots army led by the King entered England in August, 1651. On September 3, 1651, an exact year after the debacle at Dunbar, Cromwell's force of around 30,000 men clashed with a depleted royalist army of 12,000 troops at the Battle of Worcester.

The defeat of the royalist army there effectively ended the military conflicts which had raged through the British Isles.

Charles II escaped via Brighton to France in October, 1651, and Scotland was incorporated into the English Commonwealth and Protectorate.

The wars of the Covenant were over and Scotland was a conquered kingdom to be garrisoned by a Cromwellian army of occupation until the Restoration of 1660. ●

## TIMELINE

**1649**

January 4: Cromwell-backed Presbyterian regime in Scots Parliament orders blasphemy and 'worshipping false gods' to be punishable by death.

**1649**

January 30: Scots outraged by the execution of Charles I.

**1649**

February: Scots Parliament proclaims the Prince of Wales as King Charles II of Great Britain. In England, Cromwell regime reacts with hostility.

**1650**

May: Commission of the Kirk argues that 'adultery with a single woman' be punishable by death.

**1650**

June: Charles II forced to subscribe to the Covenant.

**1650**

September: Kirk ministers interfere at the Battle of Dunbar, and Scots army is crushed by a Cromwellian force half its size.

**1651**

January: Scots crown Charles II as King of Great Britain at Scone.

**1651**

August: Charles II leads Scots royalist army into England in bid to take his English throne.

**1651**

September: Cromwell's force of 30,000 defeats 12,000 royalists, ending the war and heralding the Cromwellian occupation of Scotland.

**1651**

October: Charles II flees Cromwell's Republic, taking refuge in France.



■ Cromwell called the Battle of Dunbar 'a very difficult engagement'. The Scots held strong positions, but he had the Commonwealth navy.

# Where the dream was crushed by Cromwell

**The Ironsides' leader took no joy in beating his old allies. To him, the Covenanters' army was 'godly but misguided'**

**O**liver Cromwell and the Scots Covenanters fought against each other at the Battle of Dunbar. Both sides, like most politicians at the time, spoke of their political aims in religious terms. Our problem today is (as with our own modern leaders) to decide how often these politicians meant what they said.

In the 1640s Scots Covenanters

had given Cromwell considerable help in defeating Charles I. So far so good. Cromwell and the Scots Covenanters had been united in a crusade against an ungodly king.

Cromwell regarded the Scots Covenanters as his friends. But the Covenanters had involved themselves in battles in England with the aim of establishing a Presbyterian church in England. Cromwell, however, had quite a

different agenda – religious toleration. After the defeat of Charles I, the moderate Covenanters came to believe, or claimed to believe, that Charles I would give them a better religious deal in England than Cromwell would.

They started a second civil war on Charles's behalf, but Cromwell defeated them at Preston in August, 1648. This allowed the more extreme Covenanters to make a ►

## The smart money said Cromwell's troops would run away on being attacked. But they didn't...

### ► successful bid for power in Scotland.

Cromwell had lost patience with the king – and in London, on January 30, 1649, Charles I got his head chopped off. The Scots then – perversely from Cromwell's point of view – recognised Charles's son as Charles II. From the Scots point of view, though, the Stuarts and their ancestors had been kings of Scots for around 800 years, and it wasn't for the English to go executing them. For most of the next year Cromwell was busy 'pacifying' Ireland, leaving bitter memories that persist to this day.

Then he turned his attention to his former allies in the north. Charles II landed at Garmouth, by the mouth of the River Spey, on June 24, 1650, and proceeded south to Falkland Palace. The Covenanters supported him, while forcing him to denounce his father's evil deeds. Charles II, a cynical young man, went along with this.

Cromwell and the Covenanters, former allies, both prepared for war – and Cromwell decided on a pre-emptive strike. On the day after Charles II had landed at Garmouth, Lord Fairfax, the English commander-in-chief, resigned his commission rather than invade Scotland. Cromwell himself took his place and invaded in July, 1650.

He found the Covenanters had strengthened the town walls of Edinburgh and Leith; and between Edinburgh and Leith they had built a defensive line, protected by nearly 40 guns. Later this defensive line was to be levelled off, and to become the broad boulevard known as Leith Walk.

Cromwell seized Arthur's Seat, and bombarded the Scots. But they, under General David Leslie, a seasoned professional soldier, stood firm. Cromwell issued a letter to the Scots, questioning what he saw as their wrong-headed support for Charles II. He wrote: "I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken."

He then tried to outflank the defenders of Edinburgh, moving west to the Braid Hills on August 13. Over the next fortnight he seized

the crossing place over the Water of Leith at Redhall and positioned his troops at Gogar, near where Edinburgh Airport is now. He thus threatened the Scots army's supply line from the west, and Leslie was forced to come out to meet him. The armies exchanged fire. The battlefield was for long afterwards known as 'The Flashes', probably because the cannons continued firing after dusk. But Cromwell couldn't attack, because the ground ahead of him was too boggy, and there was the additional problem that his supplies were running out.

During these exchanges a shot was fired at Cromwell by a Scots soldier, who shouted out: "I know you, Cromwell. I saw you in Yorkshire." This had been at the Battle of Marston Moor in 1644, when both men had been on the same side.

Leslie had outfoxed Cromwell who, by the end of August, was back at Dunbar, with no supplies for his troops, and many of them were ill, because the weather that autumn had been bad. David Leslie's army had shadowed Cromwell southwards, and took up their position on Doon Hill, south of Dunbar.

(It's worth climbing up there, for two reasons – you can survey the site of the Battle of Dunbar and, as a bonus, you can see, outlined in the turf, the ground plan of the hall of an early Medieval warlord, dating from some 1,000 years before Cromwell.)

Some invalid English soldiers had been shipped out of Dunbar, and this may have led Scottish military intelligence to believe Cromwell was evacuating his artillery as well.

At any rate, when a captured English soldier, a one-armed veteran, was brought before General Leslie, the General asked him if Cromwell intended to fight. "What do you think we are here for?" the soldier is supposed to have asked.

Leslie asked how the English intended to fight when they had shipped out half their men, and all their artillery. The English soldier was not overawed. "Sir," he said, "if you please to draw your army to the foot of the hill, you shall find both men and great guns also."

And indeed, Cromwell faced the daunting prospect of taking his army south by land, with the Scots army poised above him. On September 2 Cromwell wrote that "(the enemy) so lieth upon the hills that we know not how to come that way without difficulty".

The English were outnumbered nearly two to one. It has been

estimated that Leslie had some 20,000 men, while there were only 11,000 in Cromwell's army.

But, also on September 2, Leslie came down from the hill, to take up a position along the Brox Burn, and so block Cromwell's escape route south. This was a move that went dreadfully wrong.

We don't know what was in the mind of General David Leslie at this stage. Certainly, the Covenanting army had just been purged of those officers with 'politically incorrect' views, and Leslie's ear was being bent by Presbyterian ministers,

the 17th-century equivalent of 'political commissars'. Leslie later stated that he hadn't had "the absolute command" of his army.

Many Scots have long believed that Leslie was a better general than Cromwell, and that Cromwell was simply luckier. But it has been argued that, if Cromwell's troops were hungry and cold in Dunbar, the Covenanting army on the exposed slopes of Doon Hill can't have been any happier. And it has been argued, too, that the smart money at the time, not just among Scots religious fanatics, was on Cromwell's troops cutting and

■ Oliver Cromwell at the head of his army at the Battle of Dunbar. This striking view was painted by A C Gow.





■ Surviving Saltire from Dunbar:  
200 Scots colours were taken.

running once they were attacked. They didn't. At 4am on September 3, Cromwell's cavalry crossed the Brox Burn and attacked the Covenanters' right wing, between the road south and the sea. The Scots cavalry were pushed west and then dispersed. The Scots infantry, made up of many new recruits, and short of seasoned officers because of the recent political purge, now faced Cromwell's Ironsides. Some 4,000 Scots were killed, and some 10,000 captured. To add to the humiliation, nearly 200 Scots colours were captured. Leslie and the remnant of his army retreated north, but couldn't

stop Cromwell's victorious force from entering Edinburgh

In the 1640s Scotland had truly been a nation under arms. But it was a small nation, and Dunbar showed its resources of manpower and courage had been finally stretched too far.

Cromwell, like all politicians of the time, saw politics in terms of religion. He probably took little joy in fighting the Covenanters, since he saw them as a 'godly' if misguided army. But at least the Lord had given him victory.

"Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered" was his watchword at Dunbar, as the sun cut through the morning mists. "Like as the mist

vanisheth, so shalt Thou drive them away."

For Covenanting minister Samuel Rutherford, on the other hand, the Lord had turned His face against Scotland. After Dunbar, he wrote in despair to Colonel Gilbert Ker: "Oh, how little of God do we see, and how mysterious is He!"

The Covenanters had dreamed of exporting their vision of God to England and beyond. To that end they had raised army after army from a population of around a million. The Battle of Dunbar, could they but have known it, was the sign that their dream was at an end. ■



# Performance artist

If it wanted fire and brimstone, Presbyterianism could depend on Samuel Rutherford to deliver pulpit passion. But did he mix up his spiritual and sexual imagery?

**S**amuel Rutherford was born at Nisbet near Jedburgh around 1600, probably the son of a farmer. In 1617 he went to Edinburgh University and did well enough to be appointed Professor of Latin there six years later. But he resigned in 1626, apparently because he and his wife had conceived a child first and got married afterwards.

In 1627 Rutherford was appointed parish minister of Anwoth in Kirkcudbrightshire. He became a celebrated preacher and such a noted advocate of Presbyterianism that in 1636 he was deposed, and exiled to Aberdeen, where Presbyterians were not exactly popular. The Covenanting Revolution of 1638 gave him the chance to return to public life, and the next year he became Professor of Divinity at St Mary's College in the University of St Andrews.

Throughout the 1640s Rutherford was one of the most outspoken and uncompromising of Covenanters.

His faith in the cause was unshaken, even when Cromwell smashed a Covenanting army at Dunbar in 1650. He believed God was chastising the Scots because He loved them, and the English who had betrayed the Covenanters would get their comeuppance later. "Yet a little while (and) behold He cometh



(and) walketh in the greatness of His strength, His garments dyed with blood. O, for the sad (and) terrible day of the Lord upon England, their ships of Tarshish, their fenced cities, because of a broken Covenant."

In 17th-century Scotland, many people evolved their competing versions of God's kingdom on earth, and tried to impose them on everyone else.

"Toleration" was a word that appeared in most lists of heresies. There is evidence that, towards the end of his life, Rutherford thought that the cost of this in terms of human misery was just too high.

He wrote: "We might have driven gently, as our Master Christ, who loves not to overdrive; but

carries the Lambs in his Bosom"

Rutherford's public life, then, might be seen as one of heroic failure, something that Scots are supposed to be good at. But he left an important legacy in his writings.

In 1644 he published *Lex, Rex* (the law, the king) a justification of the Scottish Revolution. Later royalist regimes paid it the compliment of having it burned by the common hangman.

It is of interest to the American Christian Right in its disputes with the secular state, and an edition was published in Harrisburg, Virginia, in 1982. But it is also read by students of political thought with no particular axe to grind.

Of more general interest,

Rutherford wrote some remarkable sermons, full of Scots words that were in decline at the time. The Oxford English Dictionary cites his sermons and letters around 700 times as a source of obscure, colloquial or obsolete words. His language, and metaphors drawn from such unlikely sources as Scots law, were used to try to convey a mystical experience to congregations, to express the inexpressible.

Rutherford's preaching style, like that of some of his contemporaries, seems to have been so vigorous that modern historians have described it as "performance art".

One of his hearers said that he "had a strange utterance when preaching, a kind of screech (screech) that he never



■ St Mary's College at St Andrews University – where Samuel Rutherford became Professor of Divinity in 1639.

## The most radical covenanting ministers in the 1650s drew in crowds from 50 miles around

heard the like'. Another said that 'many times he thought Mr Rutherford would have flown out of the pulpit when he came to speak of Christ, the Rose of Sharon'.

At the great communion festivals of the Protestants, the most radical of the covenanting ministers of the 1650s are said to have drawn crowds from 40 or 50 miles around.

More remarkable even than Rutherford's sermons are his spiritual letters, many from his unhappy exile in Aberdeen. These letters, often to females, use the imagery of sexual love in the context of spiritual love, in the tradition of the Song of Solomon, and of Bernard of Clairvaux. 'To write how sweet the honeycomb is, is not as lovely as to eat and suck the honeycomb. One night's rest in a bed of love with Christ will say more than heart can think, or tongue can utter.'

This tendency of Rutherford was

criticised, in carefully moderate tones, by his contemporary Henry Scougal in *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (1677), a book much appreciated by the early Methodists.

It has also been criticised, less moderately, by more modern writers – not always of very wide reading – who simply say, in effect, "you don't do that sort of thing".

And yet an entire tradition of religious writing, from the Old Testament on, demonstrates that sometimes you do.

The question of how an artist draws a line between sexual and spiritual love remains an open one, as can be seen in American black music. While the gospel singer Mahalia Jackson regarded the blues as the devil's music, Sippie Wallace, also a churchgoer, does not differentiate between gospel and blues music. "There ain't no difference. In the church we say

Jesus, and in the blues we say baby." Rav Charles has also been criticised for "singing the blues sanctified".

But Rutherford's visions can be terrifying. He writes of a sinner haunted by fear of Hell. Even when he goes to church "there is a dog as great as a mountain before his eye".

At other times these visions can be tender. He pictures "the little birds of Anwoth", the mayflower, the fallow field, the moonlight and dews, the rising storm, the summer shower, the river flowing over bank and brae.

After the Restoration, Rutherford was stripped of his offices, and cited to appear before the authorities on a charge of high treason. He was on his death-bed, and his reply to the summons was that of someone who fears only God. "Tell them that sent you that I have got summons already before a Superior Judge and Judicatory, and I brieve to answer to my first summons, and ere your day come I will be where few kings and great ones come."

Samuel Rutherford died on March 19, 1661. ●

## War, taxes and the plague

In 1651, ordinary Scots were recovering from the effects of catastrophe. The Civil Wars, in which lands had been ruined, towns sacked and families torn apart, were finally at an end. But the people were still struggling. There was a huge tax bill for military expenditure, and many had been inflicted with billeting of troops in their homes, extra levies, and plunder of their effects. The Covenanters had raised a dozen armies during this period and the bid to stop Montrose at Kilsyth in 1645 alone had cost 200 families their fathers and husbands – men forcibly recruited in Kirkcaldy days before the battle. This represented a call of a third of the town's adult males. Also two major burghs had been sacked outright – Aberdeen by Monrose in 1644, and Dundee by General Monck in 1651.

Constant wars brought financial catastrophe for many merchants, especially those of Edinburgh who were money-lenders as well.

A notable example was the leading merchant and financier of the Covenanters' cause, Sir William Dick of Braid, who died in an English debtors' prison in the 1650s. Other Edinburgh citizens 'stripped to the sark' fled to places like nearby Dundee, victims of a decade of calamity produced by a combination of war and something even more awful – the Black Death.

The most severe outbreak of bubonic plague for two centuries brought added misery for those in east-coast burgh ports. Probably one in five town dwellers died of it in 1645. It destroyed two-thirds of the population of Brechin and more than half of that of south Leith. To trumpeters of radical presbyterianism, the plague was a punishment handed down by the Almighty on a sinful people.

Unlike other demographic crises, urban populations did not quickly recover from the plague, and rents in Edinburgh had to be cut by a third in 1651. Glasgow escaped natural disaster and most effects of war, but the overall crisis had been as severe as any since the Wars of Independence.

# The deep roots of



A MacCrimmon piper playing a salute to his chief, MacLeod of Dunvegan, in an imaginary reconstruction painted in the 1840s.

By the 17th century the MacCrimmon School of Piping was an important feature of Gaelic society

*It is the Piob-mhor, the Great Highland Bagpipe, which is pre-eminently the national instrument, not only of the Gaels, but of all Scotland*

This famous remark, made at the turn of the 20th century, is as incontestable as it is simple – and indeed still holds true today. But the way in which the bagpipe became a key symbol of Scottish national identity was a complex process. It related to the final pacification of the Highlands and Islands after the battle of Culloden in 1746 and the 'invention' and appropriation of certain elements of the Highlands and Gaelic culture.

Indeed, in 1881 all Scottish regiments, irrespective of their background, were provided with pipe bands. This only reflected the popular perceptions of the bagpipe as an 'instrument of war'.

But there is a tension between associations with Scottish regiments, with Imperial conquest, with military valour and the essential purity of the instrument and its music as a central part of Gaelic culture.

Through recent scholarly endeavours, the dominant narratives of 'the noble instrument' are being challenged – not least in what has been described as the creation of the 'MacCrimmon metaphor'.

A clear understanding of how

# the tunes of glory



■ Travelling musician – 'The Bagpiper' by Sir David Wilkie.

the bagpipe came to Scotland continues to frustrate historians so, too, do the origins of the instrument itself

The earliest evidence of the existence of a bagpipe relates to a Hittite carving of the 13th century BC, but the lack of corroborating evidence in other places tends to suggest that other interpretations of the weathered carving may carry more validity

A slightly later source, the Book of Daniel, could also date the origins of the bagpipe to well before the time of Christ

Certainly, there is evidence that the 'bagpipe' existed by the first century AD. It was a popular instrument of the Romans – used, in fact, as an instrument of war by the Roman army. Indeed, the Roman emperor Nero, famous for fiddling while Rome burned, was also given to performing on the 'bagpipe', according to his biographer, Suetonius

From these ancient beginnings, the bagpipe spread in popularity throughout the length and breadth of Europe either as a consequence of Roman occupation or through independent developments by the Continent's indigenous peoples

The question of when exactly the 'bag' was added to the pipe is problematic. If the bag was in use

in the early centuries AD, it certainly did not eclipse the bagless pipe until much later. We do know that by the Middle Ages, the addition of the bag was becoming widespread, as evidence from manuscripts and carvings clearly demonstrates. Once the bag was commonly applied, the drones appeared – first one, then the others later

Through the Middle Ages, social and economic changes affected cultural tastes, with dramatic consequences for the bagpipe across Europe. The emerging middle classes demanded a quieter, more refined instrument for indoor entertainment. Other musical instruments began to replace the pipe, though certain forms of bagpipe continued to survive

These changes affected Scotland as well. We know that other types of bagpipe existed in Scotland, but the form that they took and the way in which they developed remains unclear. It is assumed that in the isolated glens and straths of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, the *pibroch* or 'great pipe' remained relatively untouched. But the timing of the modern Highland bagpipe is largely a matter of conjecture

Iconography in Scotland demonstrates that bagpipes were in early use – back to the 12th century, in fact. It is said that both the Clan Menzies and Clan MacDonald were led into the Battle of Bannockburn by pipers. At the Battle of Harlaw in 1411, the Highland forces were reputed to have arrived "with pibrochs deafening to hear". But these stories are largely apocryphal, and for good reason

Because the Highland bagpipe predominated in Gaelic-speaking areas of Scotland, written documentary sources for the early history of the instrument are scarce. Instead, scholars rely on the oral tradition passed down through the *seannachies* or story-tellers. Their main function was to recite the history and legends of the Gaels, and given the high status accorded to pipers ▶

■ Wooden statuette of piper playing the biniou bagpipe of Brittany. The bagpipe was once played throughout the length and breadth of Europe.



The piping culture skirls on – in the Piping Centre, Glasgow.



Within the clan system, numerous tales exist on the history of piping in the Highlands

These can be contradictory, but certain dominant narratives endure prominent among them being the role of the MacCrimmons

Recent scholarship on the origins on the MacCrimmons and their contribution to the history of the great Highland bagpipe has only added to the lack of certainty about this famous family. Where the MacCrimmons came from is one part of the puzzle, though suggestions that they were descendants of Druids is perhaps the easiest to dismiss.

A second proposal is that the family came over from Ireland as piping missionaries, with the suggestion that the name MacCrimmon derives from the Irish Gaelic word *crimthan* meaning wolf. Undoubtedly there was a high level of cultural exchange between the Gaelic peoples of Scotland and Ireland in the Middle Ages, but the failure of a strong bagpiping tradition of a type similar to that in Scotland to endure into the 18th century tends to weaken this thesis.

A third argument claims that they were of Norse extraction. Supporters of this theory suggest that the family name is derived from the Norse word *Hromundr* meaning famed protector. But as with the suggestion that they came

## The fact that so many tunes were given different names by various authorities shows the difficulty of proving the veracity of piping tales

to Skye from Harris – probable as that may be – the lack of hard evidence in genealogical records make these ideas difficult to sustain conclusively.

Perhaps the most enduring narrative on the origins of the MacCrimmons, and the one supported by the family, is that they hail from the town of Cremona in Italy. A MacLeod chief participating in the social and educational experience of the Grand Tour is said to have persuaded a piper of immense talent, one Pietro Bruno, to return with him to the Isle of Skye.

Whatever the merits of these competing theories, historians are certain that the MacCrimmons were the hereditary pipers of the Clan MacLeod, based around Loch Dunvegan, on Skye, by the 17th century.

It was here that they established a 'college of piping' where promising players were sent to receive training in the arts of the *pib mol* and its classical form of music – commonly referred to as *probairreachd*, which literally translates as pipe-playing. This form of music is almost certainly not the oldest form of pipe music

because of its complexity, but it is the one which survived down through the generations.

As one leading historian comments: "At Dunvegan the great pipers, Donald Mor and Patrick Mor MacCrimmon, transformed the rigid patterns of the *probairreachd* and, in a composition like The Lament for the Children, raised it to a classic peak of beauty and power."

Thus *probairreachd* or *Ceol Mor*, meaning 'Great Music', began to take shape under the tutelage of the MacCrimmon family.

Of those pipers who came under the influence of the MacCrimmons, perhaps the most important were the MacKays of Garloch. But the MacKays of Raasay, the MacArthurs of Ulva and the Rankins of Duart were also prominent carriers of the tradition.

In Gaelic folklore the length of the apprenticeship was seven years, which accords with the saying, "To the making of a piper go seven years of his own learning and seven generations before".

In reality, however, it was probably much shorter and some

pipers would have gained knowledge from the different schools of tuition available.

Despite the existence of different theories on so many aspects of the history of the bagpipe, the piper was without doubt an integral part of Gaelic culture. He was considered to be a man of some social standing, enjoying benefits commensurate with his status. As a 17th century cleric said: "Pipers are held in great request, so that they are trained up at the expense of Grandees and have a Portion of Land assigned".

Many Highland chiefs at this time kept a retinue of a fool, a bard, and a piper.

The history of some of the tunes illustrate the extent to which piping was bound up with the wider politics of Highland society. Some of the compositions stemmed from clan disputes such as the Battle of Strome between the Glengarry MacDonalds and the MacKenzies of Kintail.

Others tunes reflected the way in which the Highlands were increasingly drawn into the machinations of the State and dynastic conflicts – the Battle of Auldearn being a classic example.

The stories behind these compositions certainly capture the excitement of the times. Perhaps precisely for that reason, they should be treated with caution.

Recent work has delved into the

relationship between Gaelic song and *Ceol Mor*. Going beyond the slightly problematic written sources of the 18th and 19th centuries, and the politics involved in their publication, this research has demonstrated how little in fact is known about the bases of many *Ceol Mor* tunes.

The fact that so many tunes were given different names by various authorities demonstrates the difficulties of proving, beyond reasonable doubt, the veracity of the piping stories. Moreover, the similarities in style and melody between supposedly different tunes only adds to the confusion.

For example, there are strong similarities between the song 'Isobel MacKay' composed by the famous poet Rob Donn MacKay in 1746 and the *Ceol Mor* 'The Prince's Salute' (1715). In this case, the song or poem followed the pipe music, but it has been suggested that the reverse was equally true.

By tracing the original songs, some radically new interpretations of traditional *pibroch* tunes have been put forward.

Whatever the process by which the tunes were composed, they were still a product of Gaelic society. Because of these links, piping could not remain untouched by the broader changes affecting the Highlands and Islands. It is commonly assumed that the MacCrimmons' demise relates to the aftermath of the 1745 Rising.

But although bagpipes are not specifically mentioned in the

proscriptive acts, certainly in the tense atmosphere following the rising, the 'war like' status of the pipe meant that it would not be openly tolerated.

In York, for example, the piper James Reid was publicly hanged after the Court observed that 'a Highland regiment never marched without a piper'.

It was no accident that the eclipse of the MacCrimmon college at Boreraig on Skye coincided with the final 'pacification' of the Highlands.

But deeper forces were at work. The bagpipe, as with the 'rehabilitated' Gael, was appropriated by other elements in Scottish and, indeed, British society.

The cultural transformation of the region was already well underway; ushered in by social and economic developments which would eventually engulf the region and its people.

But despite the tentative steps towards deconstructing some of the myths behind the history of piping in some powerful and detailed publications, the legend of the MacCrimmons remains. The trappings of the modern 'heritage industry' and, most importantly, the continued popularity of the bagpipe, ensure that the MacCrimmons' legacy lives on.

The craftsmanship, the intricacy and the melodic charm of *Ceol Mor* continues to enthral audiences throughout the world – perhaps the most fitting tribute to the MacCrimmon family. •



# 'MacCRIMMON IS DEAD AND WILL NEVER RETURN'

The legend surrounding the famous MacCrimmon *Ceol Mor* 'Cha ill MacCruimein' is a fascinating tale that suggests the MacCrimmon school may have closed during the 1745 Jacobite Rising. There are several versions of the story, but the main thrust relates to Donald Ban MacCrimmon's sense of discomfort that his chief, Macleod of MacLeod, had declared himself against Prince Charles Edward Stuart during the '45.

Donald Ban had a premonition that he would not return to his Skye home, and composed the *Ceol Mor* while making his way to Dunvegan Castle for the gathering of the clan.

In the confused aftermath of the Battle of Culloden, Donald Ban was captured by

the Prince's men. The pipers in the group protested and vowed that they would not play for the prince unless the 'caged piper living' was freed.

On hearing this, the prince immediately released MacCrimmon. Despite his fortune, Donald Ban MacCrimmon was hit by a stray bullet – rather early being the only casualty. The song, which was composed after the *Ceol Mor*, was sung in Gaelic. One verse said:

will never I will never return  
unless MacLeod should return  
MacCrimmon is dead  
in war or peace MacCrimmon will never return  
MacCrimmon will not  
until the end of the world

Boreraig, near Loch Dunvegan on Skye

which is commonly believed to be the place where the MacCrimmon family settled. A plaque that reads:  
The Memorial Cairn of the MacCrimmons of whom 10 generations were the hereditary Pipers of MacLeod and who were renowned as Composers, Performers and Instructors of the Classical Music of the Bagpipe. Near to this spot stood the MacCrimmon School of Music 1500-1800.

An interesting but unlike tradition associated with the site is that every year a piper played a *Ceol Mor* and paid a penny – which was the token charge levied by MacLeod on the MacCrimmons – for the use of the land as a piping college.

# The man who tried to read God's mind



■ Spinner extraordinary: Warriston was The Tables' rapid-rebuttal propaganda specialist

**H**e penned the National Covenant. But when his spin-doctoring did not thrive on a change of sides, the fate of Archibald Johnston of Warriston was sealed

**M**ost Scots have heard of the mythical Jenny Geddes, but few have heard of Archibald Johnston of Warriston, one of the main authors of the National Covenant. In the wake of the prayer-book riots and the actions of the like of Jenny and her sisters, the young Edinburgh lawyer shot to prominence

It was an interesting time in Scotland. A provisional government known as The Tables had been set up in Edinburgh and King Charles I's response to it was becoming increasingly threatening. The government was made up of nobles, ministers, burgesses and lairds, but above all it needed a spin-doctor

The word may sound anachronistic – but it describes Warriston's role almost exactly. He was the movement's rapid-rebuttal specialist, seizing on royal proclamations and getting the rebel response into print straight away. Warriston's legal expertise combined with his knowledge of Church history and doctrine made him a formidable propaganda specialist. Even though he was defying the King's expressed will, Warriston could claim through his legal and religious reasoning that he was only upholding the law and the Church as established by it. His masterpiece was the National Covenant itself.

Realising that they had gone too far against the King to turn back, the leaders of the new movement now needed a manifesto for their cause which would give it a cover of legality and demonstrate the extent of their support. They turned not only to the great elder-statesman of Scottish religious dissent, Alexander Henderson, minister of Leuchars, but also to Warriston. They needed to frame a document everyone could sign up to. It needed to be something which could take a radical interpretation if needs be, without being obviously treasonable.

The result was the National Covenant – one of the most inspired fudges of Scottish political history. It was an immediate success, giving the

dissidents the name by which they have been remembered ever since – the Covenanters

It established Warriston as one of the most important statesmen of Scotland's 17th century. But who was he and how did he differ from modern-day statesmen?

Warriston was the son of Elizabeth Craig, a noted godly lady who held prayer meetings in her house and who provided support for ministers protesting against the policies of Charles's father, King James VI and I. The religious intensity of the household made a deep impression on the young Warriston. He remembered as a child weeping at the emotionally charged devotions of his mother's prayer group – a response considered perfectly normal then.

By the age of 18, Warriston was a committed evangelical Christian of a type we might recognise today in the religious right in America. He had his first deep spiritual experiences at the grandiose and awe inspiring communion rituals of the dissident Presbyterians – occasions which also served for plotting subversion against royal policies in the Church.

This exposure made a permanent mark on Warriston. He made his most far-reaching decisions as the result of prayer and Bible reading. Naturally pious, he thought of becoming a minister, but the outcome of his hours of prayers on the subject was that he was guided to become a lawyer – which he did, being called to the Edinburgh bar as an advocate.

By the time he qualified, Warriston had already begun to compile the work for which he is almost as famous as the Covenant – his spiritual diary. He wrote on horseback, he wrote while singing psalms in church. He seemed to write in every spare moment of his life.

Much of it is lost but the surviving volumes of the diary run to thousands of pages. The diary has led some historians to characterise Warriston (or Wariston, as he wrote at the time) as a manic depressive or a religious maniac. Yet in many ways it is one of the most remarkable – literally, soul-searching – documents that Scottish history has ever produced. Absolutely no section of Warriston's life or psyche was left unanalysed – the harrowing death of his first young wife, his fleshly lust for his second wife, the psychotic breakdown of his eldest son, his 12-point plan for godly governance.

It was all in the diary. Here he confided all his hopes and fears, his spiritual visions, his political insights. It was in many ways a unique window into the Scottish religious mind of his time, and into the genesis of the Covenant.

Perhaps the most staggering aspect of the diary was Warriston's belief that God's will was knowable, and that it was his business to know it in all kinds of unusual and surprising ways. This is where Warriston really parts company from the mindset of modern politicians. Every incident from the defeat of the Scots by Cromwell to the cat dropping dead was analysed with a view to finding what God or the Devil had to do with it.

Casting the lot, reading a text from the Bible, reading the daily texts from his children's Bibles, interpreting dreams, getting inspiration in prayer, observing unusual natural occurrences like images in the clouds – everything was pressed into the service of reading God's tea-leaves for political



Huntly House Museum in Edinburgh, where visitors can view Warriston's National Covenant.

guidance. Warriston would even cast lots about whether to cast lots. His God was in many ways the reflection of Warriston's own incorrigibly tidy, logical, legal brain. By trying to read God's mind, Warriston reckoned that God had a reasonable explanation for everything – from family bereavements to national disasters in battle. If you were to sum up the content of his diaries in one sentence, it would be: 'To explain all is to somehow survive all.'

He saw God as a rational being who did horrific things for concrete, usually 'Warriston-centric' reasons which he could divine. The whole diary was an attempt to interpret and put into effect the divine will in an egocentric manner. It is no wonder he has been characterised as mad or disturbed. Yet his whole system was logical and, as a political project, had a surprising degree of success.

The Covenanting project involved not only religion, but a commitment to a strong Scottish parliament in Edinburgh, which could overrule out-of-touch royal government from down south.

Warriston was one of the most influential members of the new, more-powerful rebel parliament. As a commissioner of parliament (in some ways the 17th-century equivalent of an MSP) Warriston sat on the key committees in Parliament Hall and was sent as a representative of the Covenanters to liaise with the English parliamentarians who were fighting against Charles I from Westminster.

He was an important member of the Committee of Both Kingdoms which co-ordinated the war effort against the Royalists.

He was also a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines which set standards for Scottish Presbyterian worship that are still adhered

to in some churches to this day. Warriston's downfall came after Cromwell's execution of Charles I in 1649.

The Scots immediately proclaimed Charles II King, thus igniting a war with the new republican regime in England. When the future 'merry monarch' made his landfall in Calvinist Scotland, one of his most unpleasant experiences was being lectured to on morality by Warriston whom he never forgave.

When Cromwell invaded Scotland, Warriston was part of the extreme religious party who tried to refuse military help from those they didn't think godly enough. Such religious interference in military affairs contributed to the Scots disaster at the Battle of Dunbar in 1650. Warriston became the most hated man in Scotland. He lost all his offices and, in desperation to feed his 13 children, switched sides and collaborated with the enemy.

Then tragedy struck – his eldest son, Archibald, had a breakdown and, in his psychotic state, tried to raise the Devil and sign a demonic pact in his own blood. Scotland's godliest family suddenly had a son and heir who wanted to serve Satan. His horrified parents told him that, if they had not been sure of his madness, they would have handed him to magistrates to be burned – a fate which befell many less-well-connected Scots of that era. Warriston saw his son's plight as God's judgment on his own political behaviour.

When Cromwell's regime finally disintegrated, Warriston's fate was sealed. On his return to power, Charles II showed no mercy. The once-influential Covenanter was tracked to his hiding place in France, kidnapped, taken back to Edinburgh, tried for treason, and hanged at the Mercat Cross on July 23, 1663. ●

# Musical memoirs of



■ Corgarff Castle in Strathdon, where – some historians believe – the tragic and vicious incident recalled in the ballad ‘Edom o Gordon’ took place.

# merciless moments

The folk ballads that have come down to us from the mid-15th century – thanks largely to women who sang old songs to their children – tell of violence, sex, jealousy and bloody feuds

**H**istory very often appears to be fixated on the great and the good kings, queens, saints, bishops and ministers to the detriment of the folk at large, who never seem to get mentioned yet comprise perhaps 95 per cent of the population.

Some indications of popular beliefs and attitudes are to be detected in surviving balladry, a source often neglected by historians because ballads were circulated in oral tradition – a medium of which many are highly suspicious – and also because of problems of dating. Our oldest ballads go back to about 1450 but they told stories which still fascinated people who lived in 1750 and who often still inhabited similar houses in a similar landscape, raising similar crops and in thrall to the local laird in his castle.

Thanks to Sir Walter Scott, there is a widespread impression that most ballads were composed in the Borders but the 'border' between Highlands and Lowlands, particularly in Aberdeenshire and the North East, was also highly productive, as were the south-western counties between the Solway and the Clyde.

The ballad 'Edom o Gordon' commemorates a vicious episode in 1571 when the Gordons attacked the Forbes stronghold of Towie in Aberdeenshire. According to the story, the castle was held, in the absence of her husband, by a lady who requested that her son be allowed to go free. The boy was lowered over the wall in a sheet but the attacker then treacherously:

*Cut his tongue out of his head,  
His heart out of his breast...*

And, wrapping them in a cloth, tossed the bundle back into the castle to the horror of his mother who, with her remaining children, was soon burned to death.

It might be expected that local historians would be ashamed of this tragic episode but several have

■ Stained-glass tribute to gentler balladeers in The People's Palace, Glasgow.

unaccountably tried to claim it for their own localities, so that the event has been situated at places as far apart as Corgarff Castle in Strathdon, the House o' Rhodes, near Gordon in Berwickshire, and at Loudoun Castle in Ayrshire.

Violence is an obvious ballad theme and so too is sex. Casual sex almost always results in pregnancy, parental disapproval and death. In several ballads, the relationship is consummated before formal introductions are made:

*O syn ye're got your will o' me,  
Your will o' me ye've taen,  
Tis all I ask o' you, kind sir  
Is to tell to me your name*

In The Douglas Tragedy the doomed lovers are buried at St Mary's churchyard

*Out o' the lady's grave grew a bonny red rose,  
And out o' the knight's a briar  
which entwined above their graves as symbols of their love. In many other countries the ballad would end on this touching note, but there is a Scottish twist*

*Bye and rade the Black Douglas,  
And woe but he was rough  
For he pull'd up the bonny briar,  
And flang't in St Mary's Loch*

Clerk Saunders was slain by his sweetheart's irate father as the two lovers lay asleep. She thought it had been,

*A leathsome sweat.  
A wat it had fallen this twa between  
but it was the blood of his fair body*

The themes are not all doom and gloom. When Lord Thomas tells his lover 'Fair Annet' that he cannot marry her against the wishes of his family, she boldly ripostes:

*If I'm not good enough to be your wife,  
I'm too good to be your mistress*

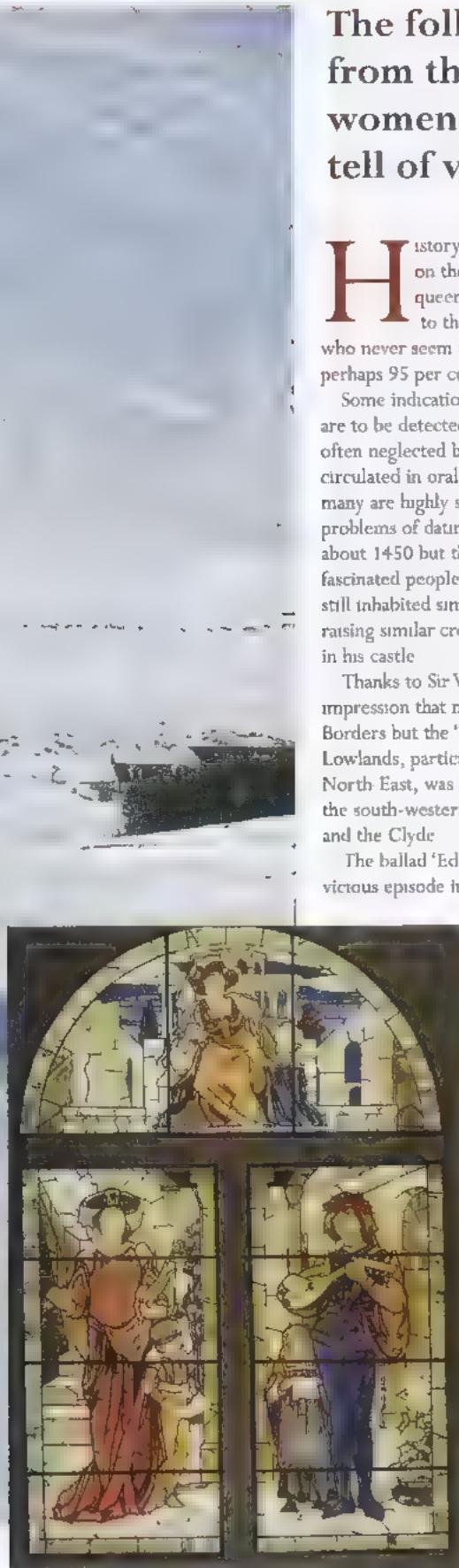
Another spirited female told her man who was about to ditch her for someone else that

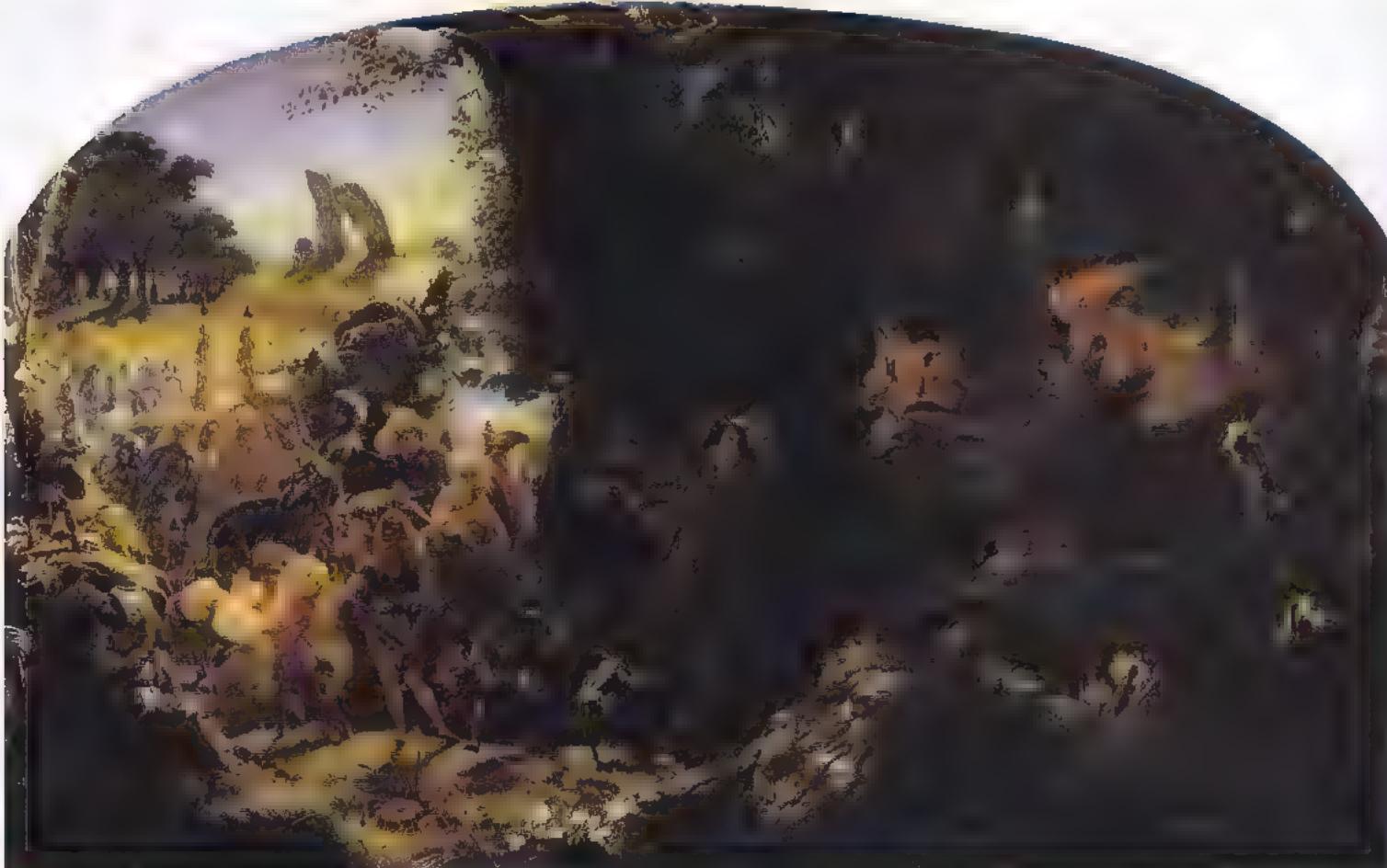
*Is ye look to other women,  
I shall to other men*

And she eventually haunted him into submission

Janet in 'Tam Lin' was possibly the ideal and idealised woman who, spurning a paternal commandment which forbade her to visit Carterhaugh lest Tam Lin ambush and molest her, could not get there fast enough – with predictable results. The rest of the ballad alludes to single motherhood, abortion, the spectacular rescue of Tam from Fairyland and Janet's outwitting of the Fairy Queen.

Indeed, several other ballads have fairy themes, although the other-wordly spirits are not the ►





The spirit of many ballads, which often combine realism with fanciful ideas like fairies, is captured in this 19th-century painting by Sir Joseph Noel.

► saccharine creatures of modern story and film, but rather malignant beings who are often indistinguishable from humans upon whom they can inflict great harm.

A few ballads treat of incest – about which unsavoury subject, we may think, the Church kept its flock informed for its own nefarious purposes.

Some others deal with rape, and from these we learn that women liked to sleep on the outside edge of the bed, as to be 'next the wa' was to be trapped, confined, dominated and endangered.

Examples of cruelty to women are not numerous, though one case of wife-beating in 1600 led to the victim putting out a contract on her husband, the subsequent murder resulted in the wife's execution after a sensational trial. There are ballads about elopement, about intra-familial tensions, jealousies and disputes, about encounters with supernatural creatures and, of course about blood.

One man presciently dreamt of his spurned lover and of his wedding bed filling up with blood. A distraught woman tended the corpse of her lover:

*She drank the red blood frae him ran*

*On the dowy dens o Yarrow*

In the horrific 'Lamkin' the ballad's eponym is a murderous stone mason who has not been paid for building Lord Wearie's castle and who determines to extract blood in lieu of lucre by killing Wearie's wife and child with the aid of the latter's wet nurse. They stab the baby in his cradle:

*Till fraeitho bore, the red blood aut sprang*

The mother hears him cry and hastes the nurse to quieten him with her breast or his rattle to be told

## Close-ups, long shots, scene switches... the balladeers' techniques were almost cinematic

that he will not stop shrieking until she comes herself, whereupon she realises that she too is to die. The two villains debate whether they should catch the lady's blood in a basin – which recalls sacramental blood as well as the universal practice of bleeding animals to make mealie puddings.

The gruesome splicing of the ritual and the domestic is further compounded when it is decided that no basin is required after all, since the blood of the rich is no better than that of the poor, hence they let the blood *Run through the floor*.

The ballads are soaked in blood but they were the products of societies under siege which historically were bloody and which were under attack by aggressive new regimes seeking their destruction in the name of progress. It cannot be coincidence that so many of the so-called 'Big Ballads' seem to date from the reign of James VI, and are based on actual historical episodes such as the slaughter of 'The Bonny Earl o Moray' or 'The Burning o the Bonny Hoose o Airlie'.

James was a king intent on the pacification of his kingdom, particularly those parts that he deemed to be 'barbarous', and it is tempting to regard the ballads as the final articulation

of societies or cultures which believed themselves to be on the verge of oblivion.

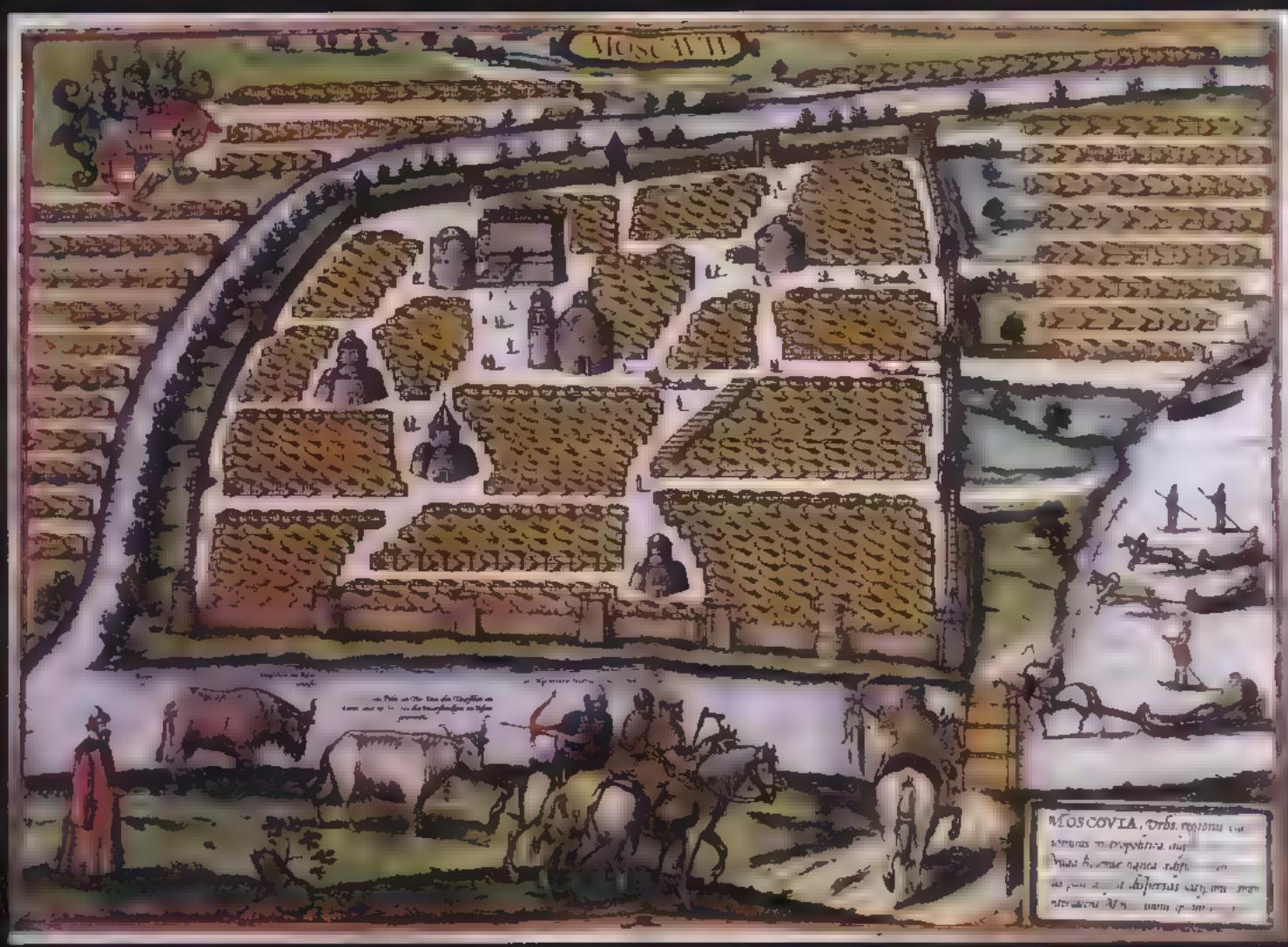
Of course, ballad composition and transmission did not cease with the reign of James VI. They were to prove a highly productive medium for many more generations. Through the ballads it is possible to recover something of the mindset and attitudes of the folk at large, to discover something of their fears and aspirations.

Balladeers employed near cinematic techniques involving strict subjectivity and the effect of long shots and close ups, as well as rapid acceleration of the story by the switching of scene or by snatches of conversation, thus enabling the reader or the listener to eavesdrop on an artier age.

When the collectors appeared from the 18th century on, most of their informants were women and there is evidence that women were almost always the main transmitters, and possibly also the composers, of the ballads. As such, the ballads may represent women's idealised view of their own world, for although many have tragic themes, most depict women triumphing over adversity, outwitting assailants and coming out on top.

They thus present an alternative to the received view that women were repressed by Scottish society's patriarchy. Undoubtedly, to some extent they were, but the ballads present the potential for escape. It is not difficult to imagine that many a woman dreamt of imitating Janet by kilting her green kirtle *a little aboon the knee*, braiding her yellow hair *a little aboon her tree* and heading off to Carterhaugh. ●

# THE FORGOTTEN SCOTS DIASPORA



Moscow as it was when Scots began to make their presence felt there. Their blood produced at least one Russian poet, Lomonosov (Lammonach).

**So many Scots went East in the 1600s that in Poland there are still Weirs and Macleans, called Wajer and Makalienski**

**D**uring the 17th century, more Scots went to the Baltic lands of Poland and Prussia – and from there eastwards into Lithuania and Russia – than took part in the massive plantation and settlement of Ulster. Yet it remains very much a forgotten diaspora, except among historians of the region.

In his *History of the District of Deutsch Krone* written at the turn of the present century, F Schmidt described the legacy in the character of the people: "The increase in strength and industrial capacity

which this Scottish admixture instilled into the German was of the very highest importance, and it can scarcely be doubted that the peculiar compound of stubbornness and shrewdness which characterises the inhabitants of the small towns of Eastern Prussia has its roots in the natural disposition of the Scot."

In Poland, the Scots organised themselves into a self-help society called the Scottish Brotherhood, with branches in all the major cities of a country which at that time was a major European power. In its day, the Brotherhood boasted members

whose legacy is still visible. Craigievar Castle, Marischall College and the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen all benefited from wealth generated by men like Danzig Willie Forbes, and Robert Gordon.

The church in Krosno was endowed from the fortunes earned in the Hungarian wine trade by Robert Porteous, the masterpieces in Gdansk's art galleries were donated by Jacob Kabrun or Cockburn, and one of the most poignant coffin paintings in the Poznan museum is of a fair-headed three year old boy, commissioned

# The Scots in Germany were so ubiquitous that naughty children would be threatened with them as bogeymen

► by his father, the merchant Robert Farquhar

Our first travel writer, Sir William Lithgow, "found abundance of gallant rich merchants, my countrymen" all over Poland. More typical than the merchants, though, were the hundreds of lads who shouldered pedlars' packs and set off into the Polish countryside to hawk everything from pins and needles to the finest linen. So many boarded ship for Danzig that Lithgow deemed Poland "a Mother and Nurse for the youth and younglings of Scotland", reckoning there were 30,000 Scottish families in the country at the time. Better over there than over here, was the attitude of the English.

When political union with Scotland was being debated in their parliament in 1606, this apocryphal warning was given of what might happen to England's green and pleasant land should the northern hordes come over the wall:

"If we admit them into our liberties, we shall be overrun with them, as cattle (naturally) pent up by a slight hedge will over it into a better soyl, and a tree taken from a barren place will thrive to excessive and exuberant branches in a better, witness the multiplicities of the Scots in Polonia."

In Polish society, trade was despised by the gentry, beyond the reach of the peasantry and very much in the hands of foreigners principally Germans, Jews and Scots.

The Jews and Scots were frequently grouped together as people to tax, and to look down on. The German



■ Catherine the Great with Peter III and Paul in 1756. She chose Scots architect Charles Cameron for a favoured building project.

craft guilds in Prussian cities like Königsberg saw the Scots travellers usurping their trade. The tone of their complaint to the Duke of Prussia is typical: "The Scots skim the cream off the milk of the country."

Given what happened later to the Jews, it is also chillingly familiar: "These people have, like a cancerous ulcer, grown and festered."

So common were they that the word Schotte covered both pedlars and natives of Scotland, while they appeared in the native folklore as the bogeymen. In both the Kashubian dialect and in German, proverbs sayings used to frighten naughty children included *Warte bis der Schotte kommt* – Wait till the Scot comes and gets ye.

Eventually the pedlars settled down in Scottish quarters such as Old Scotland in Gdańsk, Scotlandsvde in Memel and the

Scots Vennel in Stralsund. Unlike Jews, as Christians they could marry local girls and were gradually absorbed into German and Polish society. Prestigious names from the diaspora include Jan Johnston, the Polish philosopher of the 17th century, Tadeusz Baird, the 20th-century Polish composer, and the German philosopher, Karl

They were joined by another sizeable group of men with a very different calling: mercenaries. With the Anglo-Scottish border peaceful for the first time after 1603, James VI actively encouraged the kings of Sweden, Denmark and Poland to recruit footsoldiers from Scotland. Many originated from Catholic and Episcopalian parts of the North East.

Patrick Gordon's army marched an Eastern Europe 'thrang' with Scots mercenaries. Again, they

helped one another. When the Poles defeated the Russians at the Battle of Czudno the year before, Henry Gordon captain of the Daniel Crawford regiment, maintained a plentiful table in Warsaw and gave him a pass for a capitaine of horse.

Such stories gave rise to a wealth of North East tales such as the one concerning negotiations for peace between Polish and Turkish forces conducted in French, the language of diplomacy. When the talks are concluded, and the terms agreed, the Turk turns to the Englishman and says: "Weel, weel Geordie, you're a ver fowk in Inverurie!"

Most Scots disappeared into Polish society long ago, their very names Polonised and scarcely recognisable. Chalmers/Czamer, Weir/Wajer, Maclean/Makalienski,



■ 'Russian' admiral Samuel Greig – who came from Inverkeithing.

Cochrane/Czochranek, and so on. However, there are exceptions. When a Polish historian wrote that all of the name Taylor had become Taylorowicz, he received a letter from a Mr Taylor in Poznan who could name every ancestor in Poland for 13 generations back to their arrival as court merchants in Krakow in the 1620s. Not one had changed his name.

A name which survives and is glorified in Russia is that of the poet Lermontov. Few, however, know that he is the descendant of yet another soldier of fortune, George Learmonth, who was in the service of the Poles when he was captured by the Russians in 1613. When released, he settled in Russia.

More than two centuries later, when Lermontov wrote his memorable poetry, he would still write of the sea separating him from Scotland, his native land.

While there was never as huge a number of Scots in Russia as there was in Poland, those who did go tended to be exceptional individuals who profoundly affected Russian

society. The aforementioned Patrick Gordon's diary is a principle source book of 17th-century Russian history, and he himself tutored the young Tsar – who became known as Peter the Great. Patrick Gordon and his countryman, Alexander Leslie, are credited with organising Russian forces into modern fighting regiments.

Of a more maverick disposition, General Tam Dalzell of The Binns is blamed for bringing instruments of torture, such as the thumbscrew, home with him to Scotland.

Distinction was also brought home to the country, however, by fighting men who included Admiral Thomas Gordon, Admiral Samuel Greig, and James Keith from the family of the Earls Marischall. Keith served under Peter the Great but went on to greater fame as the military commander of the troops of Frederick the Great of Prussia.

One of the curious off-shoots of the ancient military connection with Russia was the establishment of Masonic Lodges along Scottish Lines. In the 18th and 19th centuries the freemasons were joined by working



■ Peter the Great, who was tutored by Patrick Gordon from Aberdeenshire.

stonemasons, as a colony of 140 workers joined Charles Cameron, the Scottish architect chosen by Catherine the Great for her favoured building projects.

In the same period, too, a dynasty of brilliant Scottish doctors virtually transformed the Russian medical system. From Robert Erskine in 1704 to Sir James Wylie in 1854, the Scots were at the forefront of the country's medical advances.

Also deserving of mention are the timber and textile merchants who took the new technology from the east coast of Scotland and set up mills all along the Baltic coast. Andrew Carrick was one such a successful merchant in St Petersburg, but more renowned was his son William, who became one of the pioneers of the new art form of photography in the middle of the 19th century.

Our flax merchants in the interior of Russia left an improbable legacy: the game of football. One of their number, John S Urquhart from Angus, spent his leisure hours knocking the local lads into shape and created a decent team. His only regret was that in all his time there,

he "could never prevail upon them" to head the ball!

There are other 20th century echoes of the ancient connection between Scotland and the countries of the Eastland trade, as the run to the Baltic was known.

The poetry of Violet Jacob recalls the romance of seeing those specially-built ships, the Baltic Brigs, heading out of Montrose harbour, bound for Elsinore and Riga. The writer George Bruce came from a Fraserburgh family of herring curers with customers all over the Baltic. As a boy, he remembered visits to his home by cultured German-speaking Jewish merchants who played Chopin.

And finally we have the moving autobiography, *The House by the Dvina*, by Eugenie Fraser. She is the daughter of a Russian timber merchant from Archangel who came to Dundee to see the Scottish side of the business and married a girl from Broughty Ferry. Eugenie's writing combines the soul of Russia and the fire of Scotland, a combination of poetry and power. ■

# He cried a river, but it was named after him

**By finding a way across Canada to the Pacific, Alexander Mackenzie won fame, fortune and Napoleon's respect**

Sir Alexander Mackenzie has been immortalised as one of the greatest travellers who ever lived. He helped to pioneer the exploration of North America, and was the first white person to traverse the continent.

Mackenzie's remarkable adventures opened up Canada, where he is revered to this day as a determined hero who blazed a trail across a vast wilderness, and so helped forge the future of the country.

He was born in 1764, but there is confusion as to where – it was either Inverness or Stornoway. His mother died when he was 10, and it was thought that the quiet, studious boy might become a clergymen.

In fact, he was more interested in the natural sciences. By the age of 13, he had recorded the animal and plant life in the Hebrides, and also learned about astronomy and how to use a telescope to study the night sky.

However, the young Alexander's life was disrupted when his father decided to escape the poverty he was trapped in and make a better life for his family in North America. They emigrated to the new World, eventually arriving in Montreal, and sought a living in the fur trade.

In 1784, Mackenzie was employed by the North West Company, a powerful rival of the Hudson's Bay Company in the battle for the fur market. He saw the job as a chance for travel and adventure, and was intent on trying to find an overland route through to the Pacific Ocean.

Mackenzie became a partner of the



■ One of the founding fathers of today's Canada: Alexander Mackenzie.

North West Company and set off for Lake Athabasca in 1788, where along with a cousin he set up a trading post at Fort Chipewyan, north of Alberta.

This was to be the starting point of his great expedition of 1793, when he made off with two birch bark canoes and just 12 Indians to support him.

He travelled for more than three months, crossing the Great Slave Lake and making his way down a huge river to emerge at what was obviously a sea.

But he had not found a way through to the Pacific. Instead, he had arrived – on the same day that French revolutionaries were storming the Bastille – at the Arctic Ocean.

Realising his mistake, Mackenzie was distraught. The great waterway

down which he had travelled he named the River of Disappointment, though the 2,500-mile river – the longest in Canada – was later renamed the Mackenzie in honour of him.

A tenacious Mackenzie was down, but he was certainly not out. Rather than give up, he returned to Britain, where he worked on improving his knowledge of geography and astronomy and on sprucing up his awareness of recent advances in the determination of longitude.

He then sailed back to Canada, more determined than ever to find his way through to the West and map a route to the Pacific. In 1792, he began his new journey.

This time he took a more southerly

route, making his way down rivers and through the Rockies. Nine months on, he achieved his goal, casting his eyes on the Pacific from a spot north of present day Vancouver known as Queen Charlotte Sound.

Unfortunately, the route he had opened up was useless as a canoeing highway for fur trading because it was not navigable the whole way, so it had no instant commercial appeal. But he was still regarded as a hero and saw a new opportunity as an author.

He wrote an account of his two epic journeys in a book called *Voyages* which became an instant worldwide hit. Back in Europe, publishing houses in Britain and Germany could not turn out enough copies to keep up with demand.

Amazingly, the book fell into the hands of Napoleon, who had it translated into French.

He realised that the explorer's description of Canada's river systems was so accurate he could use it to mount a secret invasion. He eventually decided to invade Russia instead.

Mackenzie returned to Britain, where his fame allowed him to strike up a friendship with the Prince of Wales. He was knighted in 1802 and enjoyed life on the London social circuit, where he was seen as a modern-day superstar.

Returning to Canada, Mackenzie spent a short time

However, he became ill in 1805 and certainly had less time to earn money – his writing and fur-trading had made him a very wealthy man. He moved back to Scotland in 1808, and four years later married a woman less than half his age.

The relationship was strong but relatively brief – he died on the estate he bought at Avoch, near Fortrose, in 1810 and was buried there.

Mackenzie's achievements were remarkable, and his reputation as one of the founding fathers of modern Canada remains unchallenged.

In that country, his memory lives on in a number of natural features: the Mackenzie Mountains, the Mackenzie Delta, the Sir Alexander Mackenzie Provincial Park and, of course, the Mackenzie River.



Alexander Burnes was killed by Afghan rebels in 1841.

# Epic trek of the bard's cousin

The explorer Alexander Burnes had interesting and advantageous connections even before he really got started in life. He was the son of a provost of Montrose and first cousin of the poet Robert Burns.

Born in the east coast town in 1805, he was a brilliant linguist and won a cadetship with the East India Company. He went to India on its behalf in 1821.

He was sent up the Indus River in 1830 on the pretext of delivering a coach and horses to the Maharajah of Punjab, but in fact had been instructed to carry out a survey of the political and navigational possibilities that might have been offered by the waterway.

Eventually, Burnes reached Lahore in present day Pakistan, and the following year began an epic trek which took him in disguise across Afghanistan to Bukhara in Russian

Turkestan. In fact, Burnes was accompanied by the Aberdonian Dr James Gerard who was an expert in the Himalayas, but he managed to keep most of the credit for himself in claiming he was the first Briton to make the journey. He even earned himself the nickname 'Bukhara'.

Burnes became famous back in London, winning medals from both the Royal and the Paris Geographical Societies and an audience with King William IV.

He returned to Kabul in 1836, where he became involved in the local politics of the region.

Unfortunately, that was to prove his undoing. He was hacked to death in 1841, only months after receiving a knighthood, when rebel Afghans rebelled against the occupying forces.

He was just 36 years old.

# BLUE MOUNTAIN MAN

## For Allan Cunningham, the way up in the world of plants was to be found Down Under

Allan Cunningham was the son of a Renfrewshire gardener, who went on to make his name as one of the greatest botanists and explorers in Scotland's history by helping to open up Australia.

Cunningham – who is not to be mistaken for the Dumfriesshire poet of the same name – was born in 1791.

He and his younger brother Richard won jobs as plant collectors for the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London.

But Allan wanted to travel the world and, in 1816, went to New South Wales in Australia to collect plants.

The following year, he joined an expedition on the Lachlan and Macquarie Rivers and undertook inland examinations of the area.

After giving his name to a particular species of pine tree, Cunningham helped to survey the Queensland coastline and in 1824

sailed up the Brisbane River and discovered a way through the previously impenetrable northern Blue Mountains.

In 1827 he struck inland from Brisbane, eventually discovering a remarkably fertile area which he named the Darling Downs, in honour of the governor of the time.

The following year, he established a new route between the Downs and the coast which became known as Cunningham's Gap.

By now, his brother Richard had joined him in Australia and worked hard to rise to the post of colonial botanist; but he was drowned, or perhaps murdered, while on a plant-hunting expedition in 1835.

Allan took over the job after the death of his brother, but he was worn out from his travels and not in good health.

He eventually died in Sydney in 1839, at the relatively young age of 48.



Allan Cunningham: did much to open up Australia.

# The plane that came to grief for the Royals



■ Tragedy on a bleak Caithness hillside. The bodies of the Duke of Kent and 14 others were found in and around the Sunderland's wreckage.

**Britain's wartime morale suffered a blow when the Duke of Kent died in a plane crash. But along with the tragedy came a riddle, still unsolved: why did his flying boat hit Eagle's Rock?**

**W**hen the Iceland-bound RAI Sunderland flying boat W 4026 came down under full power near rugged Eagle's Rock, Caithness, in the early afternoon of August 25, 1942, the hero of the hour found little of it left but melted metal alloy

Nor did the man – a 70 year-old Dr Kennedy, who had driven eight miles from Dunbeath and crossed another four miles of desolate moorland by foot – find anyone alive

Being more accustomed to death than other shocked rescuers and helpers, the local GP calmly and efficiently got down to the business of checking crewmen's bodies inside and outside the plane

It was only when he examined the body of a handsome air commodore who had been thrown clear of the wreck, that he allowed himself a gasp of emotion

Although there was a severe gash on the dead man's head, his face was still recognisable to the doctor. It was that of the 39-year-old George Edward Alexander Edmund, Duke

of Kent and youngest brother of the reigning King George VI.

If there were any doubt about it, that was soon dispelled by a glance at his identity bracelet – which was inscribed: 'His Royal Highness, the Duke of Kent, The Coppins, Iver, Buckinghamshire'

The sensational news of the Duke's fate in the seaplane that had become a fireball made an immediate impact at home and abroad, as the story was headlined all over the world.

It had the effect of severely damaging wartime morale among the British people, but nowhere was it more bitterly received than in the heart of his loving family.

Christopher Warwick poignantly recalls in his book, *George and Marina*, how those closest to the much loved 'Georgie' reacted to the awful development

*That evening at Coppins, when the telephone rang, Marina (George's Greek wife) had not long gone to her bedroom, intending to have an early night. Kate Fox, nurse to their third son, seven-week-old Prince Michael,*

*took the call. Numb with shock, and perhaps wondering how best to break the news, she slowly climbed the stairs. Hearing her, it is said that Marina immediately sensed catastrophe, and the moment Fox opened the door, she cried out: "It's George, isn't it?"*

*At Balmoral the King and Queen were having dinner with Harry and Alice, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, when the steward entered the dining room and whispered to the King that Sir Archibald Sinclair, secretary to the Air Ministry, was on the telephone and needed to speak to him urgently. When he returned to the table George VI was grim-faced and silent. The news, he wrote later, 'came as a great shock to me, and I had to break it to Elizabeth, and Harry and Alice who were staying with us. We left Balmoral in the evening for London.'*

But there was to be more drama on the remote Scottish hillside. From the body-count, it appeared that one person was still missing.

And indeed, 22 hours after the crash, it was learned that 21-year-



■ At her cottage door: Mrs Sutherland, who received dazed and injured survivor Andrew Jack.

old rear gunner Andrew Jack had survived, having been thrown aside in the broken-off tail turret of the Mark III Sunderland which had taken off from Invergordon.

The next day, badly burned about the face and with his clothes in shreds, he dramatically appeared three miles from the crash scene. He knocked on the door of a lonely cottage, where he just managed to tell the owner, Mrs Sutherland: "I am an airman and our plane has crashed."

Quickly removed to hospital in Lybster, the young flight-sergeant, son of a Grangemouth dock foreman, made a good recovery. Though he did recall a few details of the fateful flight – such as 25-year-old skipper Frank Goyen's suggestion that they "go down and have a look" – the lucky survivor was never to be properly valued as the key witness in the case.

This was possibly because, despite the holding of an official inquiry, the affair itself was oddly played down for many years. Though the cause of the plane's demise did eventually become a much-talked-about mystery, the renewed interest came too late in the day – Andrew Jack died in 1978 just before questions began to be asked in earnest.

But not before he had volunteered the opinion to his sister that he could never agree with the inquiry's

finding that the crash had been the result of pilot error.

Inevitably, in the long tradition of all blame for such accidents being shouldered by the dead captain, the inquiry had not been disposed to give Flight Lieutenant Goyen much benefit of the doubt.

Indeed, Sir Archibald Sinclair bluntly reported to the House of Commons on October 7, 1942, that "the responsibility for this serious mistake in airmanship lies with the captain".

The aircraft, which had apparently descended to stay under cloud and mist cover before crashing into Eagle's Rock, was said to have flown on a track "other than that indicated by the flight plan".

But those who would check it now cannot find that flight plan.

It has apparently disappeared – just one of many oddities discovered when Scots writer and broadcaster Robin McWhirter decided to take up all the loose strings of the affair and try to tie them together.

He quickly realised he was walking a path "littered with inaccuracies" and could get no official answers to many of his key questions. Such as...

Why did the record book of 228 Squadron, Coastal

Command, to which the flying boat belonged, record 2pm as the time of the accident when it was actually 1.30pm?

Why did Hansard put the crash date as August 15, when the true date was 10 days later? Why had all documentation pertaining to the official court of inquiry disappeared?

Why did the Public Record Office, the RAF's Air Historical Branch and the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle all deny having the vital records relating to the death of the man who was fifth in line to the throne when he died?

And why did the Queen's private secretary and keeper of the Windsor Archives say he was "not permitted" to release the very few other documents which are of relevance?

Why, on the very day of the fatal flight, did captain Goyen, a man of vast experience for his age, give Andrew Jack a signed photograph of himself bearing the message: "With memories of happier days"? Did the skipper perhaps know something that made him feel apprehensive about the Iceland trip?

Accepting that pilot error might not have been the cause, could there have been some sinister enemy hand behind the 'accident' that had inevitably done such damage to British public morale? Not to put too fine a point on it, had the plane been tampered with?

Plausible as an enemy plot might sound, there has never been any evidence to support it.

But, paradoxically perhaps, here was something a little more definite to support a theory of home-grown

■ The Duke of York and Marina at their wedding in 1934.

sabotage – from Lisbon of all places. The German ambassador to Portugal, Baron Oswald von Hoyningen-Huene, sent the following telegram to the German Foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop on December 5, 1942:

*As the embassy has learned, confidentially, the death of the Duke of Kent has been discussed recently in the innermost circles of the British Club here. The gist of the talk being that an act of sabotage was involved.*

*It is said that the Duke, like the Duke of Windsor, was sympathetic towards an understanding with Germany and so gradually had become a problem for the government clique.*

*The people who were accompanying him were supposed to have expressed themselves along similar lines, so that getting them out of the way would also have been an advantage.*

Amid the plethora of less-romantic and more-technical theories put forward for the cause of the crash by various writers and experts over the years have been the disorientating influence of magnetic rocks on the aircraft's compass; or the effect of down-draught on the plane's altitude.

But the one theory McWhirter was unable to consider, after all his research, was was a mistake by the pilot of 1,000 hours' experience.

He concluded: "Frank Goyen was a cool, sober pilot with all six senses ticking over."

"There is much more I could write about the crew of the W-4026, but I will limit myself to one sentence – whatever caused the tragedy, it wasn't pilot error." ●



■ In flight: the four-engined Sunderland flying boat.



# Dunbar: a lesson of defeat we couldn't learn in 354 years



**The Scots who gave the 1650 battle to Cromwell forgot the lesson of 1296, says biker historian David Ross**

**R**eading through the accounts of battles fought by Scots can be depressing. Scots seem to have a mental block when it comes to learning from experiences, and on the field of battle they have made the same mistakes made by their forefathers in earlier engagements.

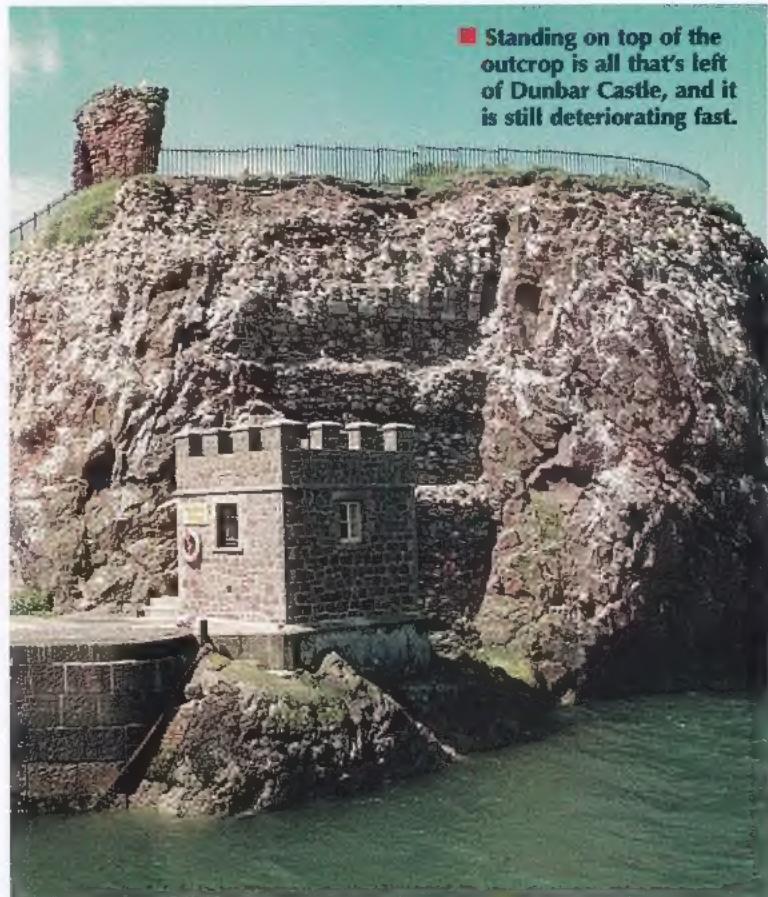
Robert Bruce, a genius in strategy who could use the terrain itself to help counteract enemy superiority, tried hard to instil basic rules in the Scots to help them in warfare; but the lessons he taught seem to have been quickly forgotten. The fighting capabilities of Scots have never been in doubt, it's just a pity that leadership has too seldom been of the same quality.

One of the most astonishing of the Scots' military defeats must have been the Battle of Dunbar, fought in 1650.

The Scots had fought a battle here in 1296 – the opening battle of the Wars of Independence.

The English army had occupied Dunbar and its castle, and the Scots army appeared on the height of Doon Hill behind the town. As the English army deployed, the Scots came down from their unassailable position, believing the English were breaking up in disorder.

As the Scots came down to the attack piecemeal, they discovered that the English were ranked in good battle



■ Standing on top of the outcrop is all that's left of Dunbar Castle, and it is still deteriorating fast.

order, and the Scots were easily routed. This ended with King John Balliol being exiled to France.

So 354 years later, Cromwell's army occupied Dunbar and its castle. The Scots again held the height of Doon Hill behind the town. They had a vast superiority in numbers – 23,000 men to Cromwell's 11,000.

They were unassailable on their hilltop and had Cromwell in a trap, but they came down off the hill to meet Cromwell's army ranked in good battle order and, again, the Scots were annihilated.

Four thousand were slain and 10,000 taken prisoner. It seems incredible that not only had the same mistake been made twice, but had been made twice in the same location.

The site of the earlier, 1296 defeat is east of Dunbar, just before the village of Spott. The 1650 Cromwellian defeat was slightly further east, the main action having taken place where the A1087 meets the A1 at Broxburn, east of Dunbar.

The original position of the Scots, Doon Hill, towers over all, and the topography of the ground has changed very little, so it is possible to imagine both battles on their respective days. Both are marked on the Ordnance Survey Landranger Map, sheet 67.

A monument to the 1650 battle was

raised in 1950, a roughly-carved stone which bears some words of Carlyle: "Here took place the brunt of essential agony of the Battle of Dunbar". It stands in Broxburn, a little north of the A1.

If visiting Dunbar, take a look at the old town house with its six-sided tower in the High Street.

The Mercat Cross stands nearby. The town house was built in 1620, so it would have been familiar to those involved in the battle in 1650.

About 28 miles east of Edinburgh, Dunbar's ruined castle stands on a rock above the harbour.

There has been a castle here since the first recordings of Scottish history, but it has deteriorated even since my first visit.

The castle was originally built on several different rocks, each connected by covered walkways. One of these walkways or stone bridges still stood about 10 years ago, but has since collapsed into the sea.

There was a famous siege here in 1339, when the castle was brilliantly defended by 'Black Agnes', daughter of Thomas Randolph, a hero of Bannockburn.

As the English missiles crashed against the stonework, Black Agnes casually brushed her handkerchief against the ramparts, as if scorning the damage caused by the English artillery. ■

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# SCOTLAND'S STORY

**NEXT WEEK IN Part 25**

## SCOTLAND UNDER CROMWELL



Scotland had long prided itself in being a never-conquered nation. It had resisted Romans, Saxons, Normans and especially the English... until Cromwell. But it could have been worse. The destroyer of the Scots' beloved boast was a reluctant conqueror and saw the Covenanters as natural, if misguided, allies. So how did Cromwellian Scotland fare? Read Part 25 of Scotland's Story.

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